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A TRAGEDY

IN A PROLOGUE AND FOUR ACTS

BY

ALFRED

LORD TENNYSON

AS ARRANGED FOR THE STAGE

BY

HENRY IRVING

AND PRESENTED AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE

ON 6TH FEBRUARY 1893

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MACMILLAN AND CO.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

PROLOGUE

SCENE 1	A Castle in Normandy	*W. Telbin*
SCENE 2	The Same	*W. Telbin*

ACT I

SCENE 1	Becket's House in London	*J. Harker*
SCENE 2	Street in Northampton	*Hawes Craven*
SCENE 3	The Same	*Hawes Craven*
SCENE 4	The Hall in Northampton	*Hawes Craven*

ACT II

SCENE 1	Rosamund's Bower	*Hawes Craven*

ACT III

SCENE 1	"Meeting of the Kings," Montmirail	*Hawes Craven*
SCENE 2	Outside the Woods near Rosamund's Bower	*Hawes Craven*
SCENE 3	Rosamund's Bower	*Hawes Craven*

ACT IV

SCENE 1	Castle in Normandy	*W. Telbin*
SCENE 2	A Room in Canterbury Monastery	*W. Telbin*
SCENE 3	North Transept of Canterbury Cathedral	*W. Telbin*

SCENE—France and England

BECKET

PROLOGUE

SCENE I. *A Castle in Normandy.*

ELEANOR. FITZ URSE.

Eleanor. Dost thou love this Becket, this son of a London merchant, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitz. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, outroyalling royalty?

Elea. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitz. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Elea. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitz. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Elea. Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! No paramour but his own wedded wife! King Louis had

no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may [*clenches her fist*]—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

Fitz. Ay, but the young filly winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Elea. Us!

Fitz. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

Elea. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

Fitz. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King——

Elea. If thou light upon her—free me from her!—let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

SCENE 2. *The Same.*

HENRY *and* BECKET *at chess.*

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Bec. I am grieved to know as much.

Hen. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.
Bec. Have you thought of one?
Hen. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.
Bec. It is your move.
Hen. Well—there. [*Moves.*
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.
Bec. My liege, I move my bishop.
Hen. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.
Bec. Look to your king.
Hen. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.
Bec. Well—will you move?
Hen. There. [*Moves.*
Bec. Check—you move so wildly.
Hen. There then! [*Moves.*
Bec. Why—there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.
Hen. [*Kicks over the board.*] Why, there then—down
go bishop and king together
I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.
Bec. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

Hen. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

Bec. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound
By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek
The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?

Hen. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

Bec. How should I know?

Hen. That is my secret, Thomas.

Bec. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

Hen. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.

Bec. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

Hen. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!
Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,
A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,
A dish-designer, and most amorous
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine:
Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

Bec. That palate is insane which cannot tell
A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

Hen. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

Bec. So I do.
Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;
And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers
Are all the fairer.

Hen. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

Bec. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd
Off from the game.

Hen. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and worried it.

Bec. No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!

Hen. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe thee
The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,
Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed
As a woman should be loved—Why dost thou smile
So dolorously?

Bec. My good liege, if a man
Wastes himself among women, how should he love
A woman, as a woman should be loved?

Hen. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved one?
Come, I would give her to thy care in England
When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Bec. My lord, I am your subject, not your——

Hen. Pander.
God's eyes! I know all that—not my purveyor
Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.
I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,
A nest in a bush.

Bec. And where, my liege?

Hen. [*Whispers.*] Thine ear.

Bec. That's lone enough.

Hen. [*Laying paper on table.*] This chart here mark'd "*Her Bower*,"
Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,
A hundred pathways running everyway,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after that
This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line—
The rest you see is colour'd green—but this
Draws thro' the chart to her.

Bec. This blood-red line?

Hen. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

Bec. And where is she? There in her English nest?

Hen. Would God she were—no, here within the city.
We take her from her secret bower in Anjou
And pass her to her secret bower in England.
She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Bec. My liege, I pray thee let me hence: a widow
And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons——

Hen. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

Bec. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Hen. Whatever come between us?

Bec. What should come
Between us, Henry?

Hen. Nay—I know not, Thomas.

Bec. What need then? Well—whatever come between us. [*Going.*

Hen. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard
To raise that tempest which will set it trembling
Only to base it deeper. I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I'll have it done—and now.

Bec. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

Hen. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

Bec. The next Canterbury.

Hen. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

Bec. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

Hen. [*Lays his hand on* BECKET'S *shoulder.*] Here!

Bec. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.
Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?

Hen. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

Bec. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

Hen. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—
A man of this world and the next to boot.

Bec. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Hen. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.

Bec. Roger of York.

Hen. Roger is Roger of York.
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.

Bec. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let me go.

Hen. Answer me first.

Bec. Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!

God's favour and king's favour might so clash
That thou and I—— That were a jest indeed!

Hen. Thou angerest me, man: I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR.

Elea. [*Singing.*]

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done——

Hen. [*To* BECKET, *who is going.*] Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

Elea. [*Seeing chart on table, aside.*] This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

Hen. The chart is not mine, but Becket's: take it, Thomas.

Elea. Becket! O—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

Hen. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

Elea. What matters? State matters? love matters?

Hen. My love for thee, and thine for me.

Elea. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France: and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of love; he dies of his honeymoon.

Hen. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether?
Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck.
God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

Elea. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*

Hen. [*Puts it on.*] On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Elea. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme——

Hen. That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Elea. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Hen. There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herb. My liege, the good Archbishop is no more.

Hen. Peace to his soul!

Herb. I left him with peace on his face—that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishoprick.

Hen. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

Bec. My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

Hen. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat. [*Leaps over table, and exit.*

ACT I

SCENE I. BECKET'S *House in London. Chamber barely furnished.* BECKET *unrobing.* HERBERT OF BOSHAM *and* Servant.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?
Bec. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.
Leave me with Herbert, friend. [*Exit* Servant.
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.
Herb. Was not the people's blessing as we past
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?
Bec. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!
Herb. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?
Bec. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.
Herb. Not heavier than thine armour at Toulouse?
Bec. But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot
That I am not the man to be your Primate,
For Henry could not work a miracle—
Make an Archbishop of a soldier?
Herb. Ay,
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.
Bec. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said,
"Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
For this thy great archbishoprick, believing
That I should go against the Church with him,
And I shall go against him with the Church.
Am *I* the man?" And the Lord answer'd me,
"Thou art the man, and all the more the man."
And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,
And smote me down upon the Minster floor.
I fell.

Herb. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.

Bec. And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the King.

Herb. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Bec. O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief
To show the scar for ever—his, a hate
Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD. *Drops her veil.*

Rosa. Save me, father, hide me.

Bec. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosa. They follow me—and I must not be known.

Bec. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt* ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT *by side door.*

Enter FITZ URSE.

Fitz. The Archbishop!

Bec. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitz. Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one——

Bec. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

Fitz. It much imports me I should know her name.

Bec. What her?

Fitz. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Bec. Perhaps it may import her all as much
Not to be known.

Fitz. And what care I for that?
Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door
Close even now upon the woman.

Bec. Well?

Fitz. [*Making for the door.*] Nay, let me pass, my lord,
for I must know.

Bec. Back, man!
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitz. [*Making to the door.*] I must and will.
I care not for thy new archbishoprick.

Bec. Back, man, I tell thee! Lest
I smite thee with my crozier on the skull!

Fitz. I shall remember this.

Bec. Do, and begone! [*Exit* FITZ URSE.
These be those baron-brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
Rosamund de Clifford.

Re-enter ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT.

Rosa. Here am I.

Bec. Why here?
We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.
Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

Rosa. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,
They say that you are wise in winged things,
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird

From following the fled summer—a chink—he s out,
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath
Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought
Lo! I must out or die.
Bec. Or out *and* die.
And what hast thou to do with this Fitz Urse?
Rosa. Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.
He found me once alone. Nay—nay—I cannot
Tell you: my father drove him and his friends,
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.
I heard him swear revenge.
Bec. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?
Rosa. I have saved many of 'em. You catch 'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within*-door.
Bec. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once. The child
Is there already.
Rosa. Yes—the child—the child—
O rare, a whole long day of open field.
Bec. Ay, but you go disguised.
Rosa. O rare again!
We'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?
I'll go as a nun.
Bec. No.
Rosa. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?
Bec. Dan John with a nun,
That Map, and these new railers at the Church,
May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!
No!

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good-night! good-night!

Rosa. Father, I am so tender to all hardness!
Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Bec. Wedded?

Rosa. Father!

Bec. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

Rosa. O, holy father, when thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.

Bec. What friend?

Rosa. The King.

Bec. Herbert, take out a score of armed men
To guard this bird of passage to her cage;
And watch Fitz Urse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.

[*Exeunt* HERBERT *and* ROSAMUND.

Poor soul! poor soul!
My friend, the King! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend the King of England—
We long have wrought together, thou and I—
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

Herb. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, the town is quiet and the moon
Divides the whole long street with light and shade.
No footfall—no Fitz Urse.

Bec. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,
Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral
Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.

Herb. Must that be?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,
Nor am I happy having charge of her—
The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower, and her Acrisius—where to seek?
I have been about the city.

Bec. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—
To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.
Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both good-night!

[*Exit.*

SCENE 2. *Street in Northampton leading to the Castle.* ELEANOR'S Retainers *and* BECKET'S Retainers *fighting.*

Enter ELEANOR *and* BECKET *from opposite streets.*

Elea. Peace, fools!

Bec. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

Ret. of Bec. They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—
Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,
With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

Ret. of Elea. My liege, the Lord Fitz Urse reported this
In passing to the Castle even now.

Ret. of Bec. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em.

Bec. [*To his* Ret.] Go, go—no more of this!

Elea. [*To her* Ret.] Away!— [*Exeunt* Retainers.
Fitz Urse——

Bec. Nay, let him be.

Elea. No, no, my Lord Archbishop,
'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,
But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.

Bec. No, not these follies!

Elea. My lord, Fitz Urse beheld her in your lodging.

Bec. Whom?

Elea. Well—you know—the minion, Rosamund.

Bec. He had good eyes!

Elea. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury
And heard her cry "Where is this bower of mine?"

Bec. Good ears too!

Elea. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs?

Bec. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.

Elea. I and mine—
And many a baron holds along with me—
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the customs—
So that you grant me one slight favour.

Bec. What?

Elea. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you
With the red line—"her bower."

Bec. And to what end?

Elea. Look! I would move this wanton from his sight
And take the Church's danger on myself.

Bec. For which she should be duly grateful.

Elea. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

Bec. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

Elea. And queens also!
What is your drift?
Bec. My drift is to the Castle,
Where I shall meet the Barons and my King. [*Exit.*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

Elea. To the Castle?
De Broc. Ay!
Elea. Stir up the King, the Lords!
Set all on fire against him!
De Brito. Ay, good Madam! [*Exeunt.*
Elea. Fool! I will make thee hateful to thy King.
Churl! I will have thee frighted into France,
And I shall live to trample on thy grave. [*Exit.*

SCENE 3. *The Same.*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

Fitz Urse. I hate him for his insolence to all.
De Tracy. And I for all his insolence to thee.
De Brito. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

SCENE 4.—*The Hall in Northampton Castle.*

On one side of the stage the doors of an inner Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of the Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HASTINGS (*Grand Prior of Templars*), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (*the Pope's Almoner*), *and others.* DE BROC, FITZ URSE, DE BRITO,

DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY, *and other* Barons *assembled—a table before them.* JOHN OF OXFORD, *President of the Council.*

Enter BECKET *and* HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Bec. Where is the king?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on the Nene,
His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd
These ancient laws and customs of the realm.
Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him,
He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly.

Bec. Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not promise Henry to obey
These ancient laws and customs of the realm?

Bec. Saving the honour of my order—ay.
Customs, traditions,—clouds that come and go;
The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order! Saving thine order, Thomas,
Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.

Bec. Roger of York,
When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,
Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
Exile me from the face of Theobald.
Now I am Canterbury and thou art York.

Roger of York. And is not York the peer of Canterbury?

John of Oxf. Peace, peace, my lords! these customs are no longer
As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,
But by the King's command are written down,
And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,
The President of this Council, read them.

Bec. Read !

John of Oxf. "If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him ; but he shall answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein."

Bec. And that I cannot sign.

John of Oxf. "When a bishoprick falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof."

Bec. And that I cannot sign.

John of Oxf. "And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal."

Bec. And that I cannot sign : for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

Fol. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father ?

Bec. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

Fol. Nay ; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.

Bec. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZ URSE, DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash of swords.*

Sign and obey !

Bec. My lords, is this a combat or a council ?
Are ye my masters, or my lord the King ?

Lords. [*Shouting.*] Sign, and obey the crown !

Bec. The crown ? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown ?

De Broc. The King is quick to anger ; if thou anger him,
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

Bec. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom ;
Strike, and ye set these customs by my death
Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

Herb. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like
To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

John of Oxf. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

De Broc. Why down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!
[*Sheathing his sword.*

Hil. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.
Save the King's honour here before his barons.

Philip de Ele. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify
Thy King ; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Antipope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Bec. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Rich. de Hast. [*Kneeling.*] Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars ;
I knew thy father ; he would be mine age
Had he lived now ; think of me as thy father!
Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Another Templar. [*Kneeling.*] Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?
Dost thou not hear?

Bec. [*Signs.*] Why—there then—there—I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.
[BECKET *draws apart with* HERBERT.
Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?
I'll have the paper back—blot out my name.
Herb. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.
Bec. False to myself—it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself!
This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.
And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness.
I see it, I see it.
I am no soldier, as he said—at least
No leader.
Fol. [*From the table.*] My lord Archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.
Bec. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd.
[*Goes to the table.*
What, this! and this—what! new and old together!
Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,
And bad me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematise him. I will not seal.
[*Exit with* HERBERT.

Enter KING HENRY.

Hen. Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?
John of Oxf. He would not seal.
And when he sign'd, he sat down there and groan'd—
"False to myself! It is the will of God!"
Hen. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.
[*Sits on his throne.*
Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—
A reign which was no reign—I came, your King!
And the event—our fallows till'd,
Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
And, looking thro' my reign,
I found a hundred ghastly murders done
By men, the scum and offal of the Church;
Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages,
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs—had them written fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.

John of Oxf. And I can easily swear to these as being
The King's will and God's will and justice; yet
I could but read a part to-day, because——

Fitz. Because my lord of Canterbury——

De Tracy. Ay,
This lord of Canterbury——

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights
Are mooted in our councils——

Fitz. —made an uproar.

Hen. And Becket had my bosom on all this;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness—
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,
Hoped, were he chosen Archbishop, Church and Crown,
Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side—
But no!
The bird that moults sings the same song again,
The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.

God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.
Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd
All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor say?
False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!
The will of God—why, then it is my will—
Is he coming?

Hil. [*Entering.*] With a crowd of worshippers,
And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd
As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

Hen. His cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross. [*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.

Hen. His cross! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his King!
It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his* Barons *to the Council-chamber, the door of which is left open.*

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The* Bishops *come round him.*

Here. The King will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.

Bec. No: it must protect me.

Fol. I am the Dean of the province: let me bear it.
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

Bec. Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

Enter ROGER OF YORK, *with his cross, advancing to* BECKET.

Bec. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?

Fol. As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as Archbishop goest against the King;
For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.
Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

Bec. Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true
To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh.
Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot.
Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* HEREFORD, FOLIOT, *and other* Bishops.

Roger of York. The Church will hate thee.

[*Exit.*

Bec. Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;
Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

Herb. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.
Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them all!

Fitz. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,
Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye
When thou thereof wast warden.

Bec. Tell the King
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

De Tracy. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks,
Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the King.

Bec. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

De Brito. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,
Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,
For which the King was bound security.

Bec. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter Lord LEICESTER (*followed by* ROGER OF YORK, HILARY, Barons *and* Bishops).

Leic. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King
Demands a strict account of all those revenues
From all the vacant sees and abbacies,
Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Bec. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leic. Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.

Bec. Are these your customs? Grant me but one day,
To ponder these demands.

Leic. Hear first thy sentence!
The King and all his lords——

Bec. Son, first hear *me!*

Leic. Nay, but hear thy judgment.
The King and all his barons——

Bec. Judgment! Barons!
Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he
That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.
I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,
By whom I will be judged; refer myself,
The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,
And under his authority—I depart. [*Going.*

DE BRITO, FITZ URSE, DE TRACY, *and others* (*flinging wisps of rushes*).

De Brito, etc. Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate—and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Bec. Mannerless wolves! [*Turning and facing them.*

When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,
True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.

Enter Herald.

Her. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your Archbishop.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

Bec. The voice of the Lord is in the voice of the People!
The voice of the Lord will hush the hounds of Hell,
That ever yelp and snarl at Holy Church,
In everlasting silence.

ACT II

SCENE I. ROSAMUND'S *Bower. A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.*

Enter HENRY *and* ROSAMUND.

Rosa. My own true liege and lord! O Henry—husband—
Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.
Hen. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—
Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this
For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket, Becket—
Rosa. Let there not be one frown in this one hour.
Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Hen. Well, well, no more of *him*—I'll send his folk,
His kin, all his belongings, overseas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all
By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.
Rosa. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, Sire?
Hen. Traitress!
Rosa. *A* faithful traitress to thy royal fame.
Hen. Fame! what care I for fame?
Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;

And round and round again. What matters? Royal—
I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

Rosa. Still—thy fame too:
I say that should be royal.

Hen. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.

Rosa. And I say,
I care not for *thy* saying.

Hen. Care dwell with me for ever, when I cease
To care for thee as ever!

Rosa. No need! no need! . . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit? . . My bank
Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!
[*She sits at his feet.*

Hen. I bad them clear
A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these countryfolk at court.

Rosa. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here. I love them
More than the garden flowers, that seem at most
Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking
The language of the land. I love *them* too,
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—
Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name—
This wild one [*picking a briar-rose*]—nay, I shall not prick myself—
Is sweetest. Do but smell!

Hen. Thou rose of the world!
Thou rose of all the roses!—thine! thine!

Rosa. I know it.

Hen. [*Muttering.*] Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of Becket.

Rosa. [*Half hearing.*] Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? *I* hate Becket?

My fault to name him! O let the hand of one
To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it
But for a breath. [*Puts her hand before his lips.*
Speak only of thy love.
There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,
There may be crosses in my line of life.
Hen. No mate for *her*, if it should come to that.
Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;
Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!
Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers
[*Muttering.*
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web——
Rosa. [*Springing up.*] Out of the cloud, my Sun—
out of the eclipse
Narrowing my golden hour!
Hen. O Rosamund,
I would be true—would tell thee all—and something
I had to say—I love thee none the less—
Which will so vex thee.
Rosa. Something against *me?*
Hen. No, no, against myself.
Rosa. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.
I'll call thee little Geoffrey.
Hen. Call him!
Rosa. Geoffrey!
Hen. [*Looking off.*] How the boy grows!
Rosa. Ay, and his brows are thine;
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.

GEOFFREY *runs on.*

Geof. My liege, what hast thou brought me?
Hen. Venal imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?

Geof. O yes, my liege.

Hen. "O yes, my liege!" He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.
Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?

Geof. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it me.

Hen. It is, my boy, to side with the King when Chancellor, and then to be made Archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.

Geof. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.

Hen. [*Giving him a ball.*] Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any way and play with as thou wilt—which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.
A pretty lusty boy.

Rosa. So like to thee;
Like to be liker.

Hen. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

Rosa. Thou art manlike perfect.

Hen. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly way of women
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant
No ill befall or him or thee when I
Am gone.

Rosa. Is *he* thy enemy?

Hen. He? who? ay!

Rosa. Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.

Hen. And I could tear him asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!
More like is he to excommunicate me.

Rosa. And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand
Before he flash'd the bolt.

Hen. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

Rosa. Ay, but he will not.

Hen. Ay! but if he did?

Rosa. O then! O then! I almost fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate
His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.

Hen. [*Raising* ROSAMUND *and kissing her.*] My brave-hearted Rose!
Hath he ever been to see thee?

Rosa. Here? not he.
And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

Hen. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

Rosa. Besides, we came away in such a heat,
I brought not ev'n my crucifix.

Hen. Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which* ELEANOR *gave him.*

Rosa. O beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine
Be mine again?

Hen. [*Throwing it round her neck.*] Thine—as I am—till death!

Rosa. Death? no! I'll have it with me in my shroud,
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

Hen. Nay—I must go; for I must hence to brave
The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

Rosa. [*Kneeling.*] O by thy love for me, all mine for thee,
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell:
I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.

Hen. [*Breaking off suddenly.*] Let it content you now
There is no woman that I love so well.

Rosa. No woman but should be content with that—
Hen. And one fair child to fondle!
Rosa. O yes, the child
We waited for so long—heaven's gift at last—
And how you doated on him then! To-day
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—yes—
But then the child *is* such a child. What chance
That he should ever spread into the man
Here in our silence? I have done my best.
I am not learn'd.
Hen. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it.
Rosa. Must you go, my liege,
So suddenly?
Hen. I came to England suddenly,
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the bounds.
Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost
His ball into the brook! makes after it too
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.
Rosa. Geoffrey! Geoffrey! [*Exeunt.*
Marg. [*Singing behind scene.*]

Babble in bower
Under the rose!
Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
Nobody near!
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
Tit on the tree!
Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY (*chattering*).

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bad me whatever I saw not to speak one word, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady [*enter* ROSAMUND], and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosa. What is it you mean?

Marg. I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis ——

Rosa. Married!

Marg. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis ——

Rosa. Hush!

Marg. —And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and ——

Rosa. The people lie.

Marg. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosa. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

Marg. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the "Crown."

Rosa. The crown! who?

Marg. Mother.

Rosa. I mean her whom you call—fancy—my husband's brother's wife.

Marg. Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if ——

Rosa. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. I am in the dark. [*Exit* MARGERY.
He charged me not to question any of those
About me. Have I? she questioned *me.*
I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known
Nothing but him—happy to know no more,
So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,
And bound me by his love to secrecy
Till his own time.
Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
Not heard ill things of her in France? Oh, she's
The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,
Myself confused with parting from the King.
Yet her—what her? he hinted of some her—
When he was here before—
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd
From love's clear path into the common bush,
And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,
Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Ev'n with a word?
I would not hear him. Nay—there's more—there's more
"No mate for her, if it should come to that"—
To that—to what?
O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[*Enter* GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey!

Geof. What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

Rosa. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geof. Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll go play with her. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.

Rosa. Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom—
O rainbow stay.

ACT III

SCENE I. *Montmirail.* "*The Meeting of the Kings.*"
LOUIS OF FRANCE. *Crowd in the distance.*

Louis. Becket, my friend of friends! I must save him from my brother Henry—and I have asked him to meet the Archbishop here. Surely thro' Henry's savagery he and his friends would have starved in banishment but for my giving them food and home. Henry's mood of wrath continues yet, and he has made York, in defiance of Canterbury, crown young Henry. Therefore our holy Becket keeps the threat of the Pope over England. Now is the time to patch up a peace. If we steer well, young Henry, whom Becket loves, will serve our Becket's and the Church's cause, and all will yet be well.

Enter HENRY.

Hen. Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope, between
The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game
For men to play with God.

Hen. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove
True wife to you.

Hen. Tut, tut! did we convene
This conference but to babble of our wives?
They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my "Monk-King,"
Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy Church
May rock, but will not wreck, nor our Archbishop
Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea
Blown by the breath of kings. Restore his kin.
Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

Hen. The friends we were!
The world had never seen the like before.
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.
Well, well, we will be gentle with him, gracious—
Most gracious.

[*Voices from the Crowd*, "Blessed be the *Lord Archbishop.*"

Enter BECKET, *after him*, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROC, FITZ URSE, *etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly king,
The word should come from him.

Bec. [*Kneeling.*] Then, my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

Hen. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

Bec. [*Rising.*] Saving God's honour!

Hen. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the Devil's honour, his yes and no.

Brother of France, you have taken, cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own church by night,
No man pursuing. I would have had him back.
Take heed he do not turn and rend you too.
Yet, yet—that none may dream
I go against God's honour—ay, or himself
In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest heads from England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and Anjou:
Let these decide on what was customary
In olden days, and all the Church of France
Decide on their decision, I am content.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles himself enough.

Bec. [*Aside.*] Words, words! [*Aloud.*] My lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to those
That went before us for their work, which we
Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet ——

Louis. My lord, will you be greater than the Saints,
More than St. Peter? whom —— what is it you doubt?

Bec. O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honour for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Hen. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!
No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.
But for your Christian, look you, you shall have
None other God but me—me, Thomas, son
Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!
I hear no more. [*Exit.*

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My lord,
We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother
Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant the Church
King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,
We that are kings are something in this world,
And so we pray you, draw yourself from under
The wings of France. We shelter you no more. [*Exit.*

John of Oxf. I am glad that France hath scouted him at last:
I told the Pope what manner of man he was. [*Exit.*

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either realm,
Let either cast him away like a dead dog! [*Exit.*

Fol. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,
And let another take his bishoprick! [*Exit.*

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.
I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*

Fitz. When you will. [*Exit.*

Bec. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,
And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs!
Cursed Fitz Urse, and all the rest of them
That feed this hate between my liege and me,
And trample on the rights of Englishmen!
See here!

Herb. What's here?

Bec. A notice from the priest,
To whom our John of Salisbury committed
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should be back
In England ev'n for this.

Herb. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Bec. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger.

Herb. The King!

Re-enter KING HENRY.

Hen. We have had so many hours together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more alone.

Bec. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Hen. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Bec. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,
London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

Hen. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

Bec. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Hen. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

Bec. And Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Hen. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

Bec. And is it then with thy good-will that I
Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those
Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

Hen. Well, well, then—have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.
What more, my lord Archbishop? What more, Thomas?
I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Bec. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Hen. Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most unknightly,

Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.
And so farewell, until we meet in England.

Bec. Farewell, my liege!

Herb. Did the King speak of the customs?

Bec. No!

[*Exit* HENRY, *then the* Barons *and* Bishops.

The State will die, the Church can never die.
The King's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so—my visions in the Lord. And when my voice
Is martyred mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again between us.
The crowd are scattering, let us move away!
And thence to England.

SCENE 2. *Outside the Woods near* ROSAMUND'S *Bower.*

ELEANOR. FITZ URSE.

Elea. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds: his exit is our adit:
Watch! he will out again, and presently.

[*A great horn winded.*

Fitz. Hark! Madam!

Elea. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!

[*A Countryman flying.*

Whither away, man? what are you flying from?

Coun. The witch! the witch! she sits naked by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in there to-day: I holla'd to him, but he

didn't hear me: he'll never out again, the witch has got him. I daren't stay—I daren't stay!

Elea. Kind of the witch to give thee warning tho'.

[*Man flies.*

Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

Fitz. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.

Coun. Fly thou too. The King keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds, a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

Elea. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place. Now let the King's fine game look to itself. [*Horn.*

Fitz. Again!—
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.

Elea. I have my dagger here to still their throats.

Fitz. Nay, Madam, not to-night—the night is falling. What can be done to-night?

Elea. Well—well—away.

[*Exit* FITZ URSE.

Geof. [*Coming out of the wood.*] Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Elea. Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geof. On my legs.

Elea. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geof. No; I only love mother.

Elea. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geof. They call her —— But she lives secret, you see.

Elea. Why?

Geof. Don't know why.

Elea. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geof. Can't tell.

Elea. What does she call him?

Geof. My liege.

Elea. Pretty one, how camest thou?

Geof. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Elea. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geof. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

Elea. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geof. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

Elea. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—[*aside*] little bastard. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

Geof. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 3. ROSAMUND'S *Bower.*

Rosa. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost.
I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;
I sent another, and she comes not back.
I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,
Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery,
And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY *and* ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to!
[*Seeing* ELEANOR.
Ha, you!
How came you hither?

Elea. Your own child brought me hither!

Geof. You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosa. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,
Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worse befall you.

Elea. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the King. The King
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman—
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him
To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late,
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosa. I *should* believe it.

Elea. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosa. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the

fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

Geof. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks.

Rosa. Go. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.

Elea. He is easily found again. *Do* you believe it?
I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it—see!
[*Draws a dagger.*
What! have I scared the red rose from your face
Into your heart. But this will find it there,
And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosa. Help! help!

Elea. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,
Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosa. I do beseech you—my child is so young.
I am not so happy I could not die myself,
But the child is so young. You have children—his;
And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—
Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done
Somehow; but if you do not—there are those
Who say you do not love him—let me go
With my young boy, and God will be our guide,
And I will beg my bread along the world.
I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.

Elea. Will you not say you are not married to him?

Rosa. Ay, Madam, I can *say* it, if you will.

Elea. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosa. No.

Elea. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosa. No.
I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.
I have heard of such—yea, even among those
Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any such,
I am snow to mud.

Elea. The more the pity then
That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZ URSE.

Fitz. Give her to me.

Elea. The Judas-lover of our passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.

Fitz. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honeymoon.

Elea. No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

Fitz. You bad me take revenge another way—
To bring her to the dust. . . . Come with me, love,
And I will love thee. . . . Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.

Rosa. Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[ELEANOR *offers the vial.*

No, no! I will not have it.

Elea. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

Rosa. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour
You play with words. You had never used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child . . .
No . . . mercy! No! [*Kneels.*
Elea. Play! . . . that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: what's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! Fitz Urse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Ev'n than the death. Take thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitz Urse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.
Rosa. [*Rising.*] I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it: both of us will die,
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.
Elea. [*Raising the dagger.*] This in thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

Enter BECKET *from behind. Catches hold of her arm*

Bec. Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*

Elea. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems—
At least mine own is frailer: you are laming it.

Bec. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry bad me
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.

Elea. My lord Fitz Urse.

Bec. He too! what dost thou here?
Go, lest I blast thee with anathema
And make thee a world's horror.

Fitz. My lord, I shall
Remember this.

Bec. I *do* remember thee. [*Exit* FITZ URSE.
Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee, leave it, daughter.
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Castle in Normandy. King's Chamber.*

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed followers,
Cursed and anathematised us right and left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your son—
Hen. Roger of York, you always hated him,
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.
Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.
Hen. I cannot think he moves against my son,
Knowing right well with what a tenderness
He loved my son.
Roger of York. Before you made him king,
Crowning thy young son by York,
London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.
Hen. God's eyes, for that I made him full amends,
Told him that he should crown my Henry o'er again.
What would ye have me do?
Roger of York. Summon your barons; take their counsel: yet
I know—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,
Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.
Hen. What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you do not work upon me.
I see your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?
He shall absolve you . . . you shall have redress.
I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.
I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, *and* JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.
If God would take him in some sudden way—
Would he were dead.

De Tracy. [*Entering.*] My liege, the Queen of England.

Hen. God's eyes!

Enter ELEANOR.

Elea. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.
I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd
I was the bride of England, and a queen.

Hen. And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

Elea. I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.
The brideless Becket is thy king and mine.

Hen. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket.
What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

Elea. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.
Do you know this cross, my liege?

Hen. [*Turning his head.*] Away! Not I.

Elea. Not ev'n the central diamond, worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

Hen. That?

Elea. I gave it you, and you your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,
So dead henceforth to you.

Hen. Dead! you have murder'd her,
Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.

Elea. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.

Hen. [*Calling out.*] Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.

Elea. First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.
Will you have this again?

[*Offering the cross. He dashes it down.*

St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.
Then mine once more. [*Puts it on.*
Your cleric hath your lady.
Hath used the full authority of his Church
To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Hen. To put her into Godstow nunnery!
He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—
I do remember.
He bad me put her into a nunnery—
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!

Elea. Aha!

Enter the four Knights.

Hen. Sluggards and fools!
The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!
The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!
The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,
A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he—
I'll have her out again, he shall absolve
The bishops—they but did my will—not you—
Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?
You are no King's men—you—you—you are Becket's men.
Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
Will no man free me from this pestilent priest? [*Exit.*

[*The* Knights *draw their swords.*

Elea. Are ye King's men? I am King's woman, I.

The Knights. King's men! King's men!

SCENE 2. *A Room in Canterbury Monastery.*

BECKET *and* JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salis. Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd to England
With more of olive-branch and amnesty
For foes at home. Thou hast raised the world against thee.

Bec. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.

Enter ROSAMUND.

Rosa. Can I speak with you
Alone, my father?

Bec. Come you to confess?

Rosa. Not now.

Bec. Then speak; this is my other self,
Who like my conscience never lets me be.

Rosa. I know him; our good John of Salisbury.

Bec. Breaking already from thy noviciate
To plunge into this bitter world again—
These wells of Marah. I am grieved, my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosa. Small peace was mine in my noviciate, father.
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept
That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
My lord, you have not excommunicated him?
Oh, if you have, absolve him!

Bec. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

Rosa. I know *him*.

John of Salis. No, daughter, you mistake our good Archbishop;
He thought to excommunicate him—Thomas,
You could not—old affection master'd you,
You falter'd into tears.

Rosa. God bless him for it.

Bec. Nay, make me not a woman, John of Salisbury,
Nor make me traitor to my holy office.
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
"The King is sick and almost unto death."
How could I excommunicate him then?

Rosa. And wilt thou excommunicate him now?

Bec. Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.
And were it longer—well—I should not do it.

Rosa. Thanks in this life, and in the life to come.

Bec. Get thee back to thy nunnery with all haste;
Let this be thy last trespass. But one question—
How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey?
Doth he remember me?

Rosa. I warrant him.

Bec. He is marvellously like thee.

Rosa. Liker the King.

Bec. No, daughter.

Rosa. Ay, but wait.
He will be very king.

Bec. Ev'n so: but think not of the King: farewell!

Rosa. My lord, the city is full of armed men.

Bec. Ev'n so: farewell!

Rosa. I will but pass to vespers
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so return.

Bec. Pray for me too: much need of prayer have I.

[ROSAMUND *kneels and goes.*

John of Salis. What noise was that?

Bec. I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all
The world God made—even the beast—the bird!

John of Salis. Ay, still a lover of the beast and bird?
But these arm'd men—will you not hide yourself?

Bec. There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid
Lived in my mother's house: if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her—she
Was the world's lily.

John of Salis. Ay, and what of her?

Bec. She died of leprosy.

John of Salis. I know not why
You call these old things back again, my lord.

Bec. The drowning man, they say, remembers all
The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salis. Ay—but these arm'd men—will *you* drown *yourself?*
He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.

Bec. What day of the week? Tuesday?

John of Salis. Tuesday, my lord.

Bec. On a Tuesday was I born, and on a Tuesday
Baptized; and on a Tuesday came to me
The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
And on a Tuesday ———

TRACY *enters, then* FITZ URSE, DE BRITO, *and* DE MORVILLE. Monks *following.*

—on a Tuesday ———Tracy

A long silence, broken by FITZ URSE, *saying, contemptuously,*

God help thee!

Fitz. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you?

Bec. As you will.

Fitz. Nay, as *you* will.

Bec. Nay, as *you* will.

John of Salis. Why then
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four* Knights *and* BECKET.

Fitz. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morv. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

Fitz. The King condemns your excommunicating ——

Bec. This is no secret, but a public matter.
In here again!

[JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* Monks *return.*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitz. The King commands you to absolve the bishops
Whom you have excommunicated.

Bec. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

Fitz. But you advised the Pope.

Bec. And so I did.
They have but to submit.

The Four Knights. The King commands you.
We are all King's men.

Bec. King's men at least should know
That their own King closed with me last July
That I should pass the censures of the Church
On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,
And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

Fitz. What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

Bec. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.
Nay, you yourself were there: you heard yourself.

Fitz. I was not there.

Bec. I saw you there.

Fitz. I was not.

Bec. You were. I never forget anything.

Fitz. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.
How long shall we forbear him?

[Knights *crowd round.*

Bec. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
To God and to the Holy Father. No!
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth
Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
Blowing the world against me, I would stand
Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files, who die
For God, to people heaven in the great day
When God makes up His jewels.

De Morv. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life?

Bec. As I shall speak again.

Fitz., De Tracy, and De Brito. To arms!

[*They rush out,* DE MORVILLE *lingers.*

Bec. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even now
You seem the least assassin of the four.
Oh, do not damn yourself for company!
Is it too late for me to save your soul?
I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morv. Becket, it *is* too late. [*Exit.*

Bec. Is it too late?
Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

Knights. [*In the distance.*] Close the great gate—ho, there—upon the town.

Becket's Ret. Shut the hall-doors. [*A pause.*

John of Salis. You should have taken counsel with your friends

Before these bandits brake into your presence.
They seek—you make—occasion for your death.
Bec. My counsel is already taken, John.
I am prepared to die.
John of Salis. We are sinners all,
The best of all not all-prepared to die.
Bec. God's will be done!
John of Salis. Ay, well. God's will be done!
Grim. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, the knights are arming in the garden
Beneath the sycamore.
Bec. Good! let them arm.
Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.
He knows the twists and turnings of the place.
Bec. No fear!
Grim. No fear, my lord.
[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The* Monks *flee.*
Bec. [*Rising.*] Our dovecote flown!
I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.
John of Salis. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.
Bec. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?
Valour and holy life should go together.
Why should all monks be cowards?
John of Salis. Are they so?
I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.
[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*
Grim. Vespers are beginning.
You should attend the office, give them heart.
They fear you slain: they dread they know not what.
Bec. Ay, monks, not men.
Grim. I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.
Some would stand by you to the death.

Bec. Your pardon.

John of Salis. He said, "Attend the office."

Bec. Attend the office?
Why then—The Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?
Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John.

[GRIM *takes it.*

Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

Bec. The Pall!
I go to meet my King! [*Puts on the pall. Exeunt.*

SCENE 3. *North Transept of Canterbury Cathedral. On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening.* Monks *heard chanting the service.* ROSAMUND *kneeling.*

Rosa. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—
Not yet, thank heaven. O save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*

BECKET (*entering, forced along by* JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* GRIM).

Bec. No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person,
Why do you force me thus against my will?
Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.
Bec. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

[*Service stops.* Monks *come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*

Monks. Here is the great Archbishop! He lives! he lives!
Bec. Back, I say!
Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun? [*Noise in the cloisters.*
Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!
Bec. What do these people fear?
Grim. Those arm'd men in the cloister.
Bec. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.
Grim and others. Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*

Bec. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!
And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a castle:
Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter* Monks *from cloister.*

Monks. A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—
To the choir, to the choir!

[Monks *divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears* BECKET *along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

John of Salis. No, to the crypt!

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

Bec. Oh, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Enter the four Knights. JOHN OF SALISBURY *flies to the altar of St. Benedict.*

Fitz. Here, here, King's men!

[*Catches hold of the last flying* Monk.

Where is the traitor Becket?

Bec. Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England. [*Descending into the transept.*
I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

Fitz. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morv. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Bec. Never,—
Except they make submission to the Church.
You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morv. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Bec. I will not.
I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
One of my flock!

Fitz. Seize him and carry him!
Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!

[FITZ URSE *lays hold of the* Archbishop's *pall.*

Bec. Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*

De Morv. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

Fitz. [*Advances with drawn sword.*] I told thee that I should remember thee!

Bec. Profligate pander!

Fitz. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[*Strikes the* Archbishop, *and wounds him in the forehead.*

Bec. [*Covers his eyes with his hand.*] I do commend my cause to God.

Fitz. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosa. [*Rushing down steps from the choir.*] No, No, No, No!
Mercy, mercy,
As you would hope for mercy.

Fitz. Strike, I say.

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Fitz. Strike!

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on* GRIM'S *arm, and glances from it, wounding* BECKET.

This last to rid thee of a world of brawls!

Bec. [*Falling on his knees.*] Into Thy hands, O Lord—
into Thy hands!—— [*Sinks prone.*

De Brito. The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

[DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZ URSE, *rush out, crying "King's men!"* DE MORVILLE *follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral.* ROSAMUND *seen kneeling by the body of* BECKET.

THE END

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